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ABSTRACT

In view of the changes that technology is ushering into the field of education, it is necessary to make some substantial changes in the education of teachers. By broadening the base of teacher education, future educators will have a better understanding of: (1) the social, economic, and political changes set in motion by new technology; (2) the impact of these changes on human institutions and in human lives; (3) the broader concept of education as one of the important human services; and (4) the teaching and learning process as it occurs throughout the human lifespan in diverse settings. Future educators will need to develop diagnostic, counseling, and communication skills as well as have facility in using new information processing and communications technology. They will also have to develop a respect for human dignity, a global perspective on human problems, and a strong commitment to lifelong learning. Seven general categories that should be part of a future-oriented teacher education program include: (1) human development; (2) human services education systems; (3) teaching and learning processes; (4) curriculum resources; (5) social change processes and technologies; (6) futures planning in education and human services; and (7) social and behavioral sciences methodologies and computer applications. (JMK)

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UPDATING TEACHER EDUCATION IN LIGHT OF THE CHANGED CONTEXT OF EDUCATION

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UPDATING TEACHER EDUCATION IN LIGHT OF CHANGED CONTEXT OF EDUCATION

Introduction

Most lay people, and even some professional educators, tend to equate education with schooling, an error easy to make. After all, schools are the primary institutions established by society to educate its young and teachers are hired for the express purpose of educating them. Two serious misunderstandings result from this basic misconception. First it leads one to assume that young people's education is completed when they graduate from high school unless they decide to go to college. Second, the extensive influence that other institutions of society (e.g., the media, the church, the family) exert on development are ignored or discounted. This results in a serious discontinuity between schools and the outside world. In our opinion, the tendency on the part of teacher to equate education with schooling stems, at least in part, from the way in which they are trained in the typical teacher preparation program; although the conditions under which teachers work, the organization of the school, the school curriculum and the definition of the teacher role probably all contribute to this misconception.

At a time when developments in the field of telecommunication, videotechnology, and computer-based learning systems are so radically changing the larger world of learning, schools can ignore them only at the risk of becoming anachronistic, if not totally obsolete, institutions. One of the major effects of the new educational technology has been to make information of all kinds readily available to anyone who wants it. Opportunities for learning will become even more widely distributed in society than they are today. In addition to the traditional institutions of learning (e.g. libraries, museums, and art institutes) cable TV networks, video cassettes, interactive videodiscs, and other computerized.

learning systems will greatly enhance the opportunities for learning. These opportunites for learning will be available to people in their homes, in public libraries and places of work. Because of the rapid turnover in knowledge and technique, the learning systems will be continuously updated. Much of the job related training will take place on the job. Industries, and business corporations will become even more heavily involved in education than they are at present; so will professional organizations, government bureaus and armed forces. (Shane, 1981)

The Future World of Learning

Not only will the opportunities for learning increase manifold in the world of tomorrow, so will the need and demand for it. In a rapidly changing society, peple will have to continuously upgrade their knowledge and skill. Large numbers of people will have to acquire new skills periodically in order to change jobs or careers. Furthermore, since fewer people will be engaged in the work force, and most workers will be working shorter hours, there will be greatly increased demand for leisure time, recreational and avocational activities, and the readiness to learn the necessary skills for participation. The same conditions are also likely to increase the demand for liberal learning in the arts, humanities and sciences for a better understanding and appreciation of human experience. Another factor contributing to the demand for lifelong learning will be longer life expectancy as a result of better health care. The proportion of people over the age of 65 in the population is increasing steadily. The educational and recreational needs of the group are just beginning to receive attention. To enchance the quality of life for later years, it will be necessary to devise a

broad range of age appropriate and meaningful programs for education and social involvement. Periods of rapid social change, triggered by technological developments, often produce dislocation, confusion, and distress for some segments of society, workers who are displaced by machinery, people who become overwhelmed by change in their personal or social situation and feel that they cannot cope with the demands of life, need not only economic assistance but counseling as well. (Evans, 1979; Toffler, 1980). Furthermore, in order to be rehabilitated into a productive role, these people would need a program of reeducation or retraining. Education thus becomes an important part of human services broadly conceived. As society moves further into the post-industrial era, human services, including education, will assume greater significance, partly due to the quickened pace of social change, and partly due to the enhanced need for human contact in an increasingly impersonal environment. It is predicted that by the year 2000, 65 percent of all jobs would be in the human services area (Cetron and O'Toole, 1982).

Needed Modifications in Teacher Education Programs

In view of the far reaching changes that new technology is ushering in into the field of education, and in the world at large, it seems necessary to make some substantial changes in the education of teachers. The current system for the professional education of teachers was established around the turn of the century. The basic structure of the system has remained practically unchanged over the years, although methodological innovations based on different psychological theories of behavior and learning have been introduced from time to time, e.g., competency based programs, microteaching, humanistically oriented programs, and so on. Another major thrust for the reform of teacher education

has been to move it out of college classrooms to the field, that is, the elementary or secondary school where the teacher would eventually practice his/her craft. Another aspect of the same movement has been to involve the practicing teacher in the training of the apprentice teacher to a greater extent, both in the preservice as well as the inservice phase. The move toward field based teacher education has had an important side effect on college programs. The teacher education faculty in colleges have tried to respond to the concerns of the classroom teacher by developing new courses with a practical orientation, dealing with topics such as classroom management, individualized instruction, prescriptive teaching and so on. These innovations have undoubtedly brought teacher education closer to the realities of the teaching profession. (Smith, 1980).

We are proposing a broadening of the base of teacher education, so that the teacher (or rather educator) of tomorrow will have a better understanding of (a) the social, economic and political changes set in motion by new technology; (b) the impact of these changes on human institutions and in human lives; (c) the broader concept of education as one of the important human services; (d) the teaching and learning process as it occurs throughout the human life span and diverse settings.

Knowledge Base For Future Programs of Teacher Education

In order to accomplish these goals, the content of teacher education programs will have to include the following knowledge base:

°A sophisticated understanding of the processes and determinants of human development from a multidisciplinary perspective, including a balanced consideration of both facilitators as well as negative and

restrictive forces that shape the course of development in the contemporary society. A perspective on human development such as that developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) will help integrate what otherwise appears to be a mass of disconnected facts and figures.

°An overview of human diversity, not only in terms of individual differences, but also in regard to cultural and subcultural differences, and their implications for learning.

°A thorough understanding of the psychology of teaching and learning as it occurs in formal and informal settings.

°An understanding of the scientific method and a working knowledge of the tools and techniques of data gathering and analysis, including computer applications.

°A clear understanding of the basic principles of professional ethics and human as they apply to education and other human services.

Skills

In addition to the knowledge base described above, the educator and other human service professionals of tomorrow will need to develop some specific skills and some general attitudes and values.

The most important skills, of course, will be the skills involved in human realtions. In an increasingly impersonal envirionment, the ability to relate to wide variety of human beings as human beings will assume greater importance.

The future educator/human service professional will need important diagnostic skills in order to determine the educational needs of learners and guide them toward the most appropriate learning materials. Counseling skills to help people resolve their problems in such a way

that it enhances their own ability to solve problems in future will be essential.

The ability to function as a liaison or link between people and community resources so that these resources are optimally utilized and augmented.

Skill in communicating with the power structure in the organization face to face as well as in writing will be necessary to ensure adequate level of funding for the services, and for making any improvements in the system for the delivery of services or programs. Research and evaluation skills will be needed to gather information about program effectiveness, and for compiling this information for the funding agencies.

One of the most important skills the future educator/human service professional will need is facility in using new information processing and communications technology. It will be safe to assume that the use of new technology will greatly increase in every phase of education and human service from planning for programs to the actual delivery of services to clients. The educator of tomorrow would probably spend less time in working with groups, but he/she may still require skill in working with small groups of students.

Attitudes-Values

The future educator/human service professional will need to develop some general attitudes and values to guide his day to day work. The most important one will be respect for human dignity. In an environment that is going to become increasingly impersonal and bureaucratized,

individuals are likely to feel that they are at the mercy of forces beyond their control.

Another important attitude will be a general stance toward change, expecting things to change, anticipating change and being prepared to live with change, uncertainty and ambiguity.

A global perspective on human problems, and their possible solutions, will be helpful in a world that is becoming increasingly more interdependent.

An abiding faith in human intelligence to solve problems by rational and scientific methods. A strong faith in democratic values and principles of justice, equity, and fair play in the allocation of resources.

A strong commitment to lifelong learning for oneself as for ones students and clients.

In light of the goals and objectives of a future oriented, reconstructed program for the education of teachers and other human services professionals, we next specify the major elements of a core curriculum. It is not a blue print for the total system of training. It is assumed that a great deal of specialized training will take place beyond the core curriculum, in courses dealing with the specific problems of particular settings. Additional specialized training will most likely occur in internship experiences, in specific settings. It is also assumed that the professional sequence of studies will be preceded by a sound program of liberal education.

A Human Services Education Professional Core Curriculum

The core curriculum components described below have been designed to provide the knowledge base, the skills, and the generic attitudes and values necessary to any human services education professional. These ideas are under further study and development by a Human Services Core Curriculum Task Force in the College of Education at the University of Minnesota, Duluth. General categories, rather than an exhaustive set of objectives, are provided within the scope of this paper.

A. Human Development

. A broad, multidisciplinary perspective on life-span development, focusing on the changing needs and capabilities of the human organism, and how it is influenced by the different environments in which it exists--the family, neighborhood, school, community, peer group, mass communication, and society at large, along with the interrelationships among these environmments.

B. Human Services Education Systems

A systematic account of the historical development and current status of the wide range of agencies and institutions involved in formal and informal education, information dissemination, and other educational services in society; systems philosophy, organization, social policies, modes of operation, and impact on human development.

C. Teaching and Learning Processes

A comprehensive analysis and demonstration of the process by which people of differing age levels and other characteristsics learn about facets of the world in which they live; formal and informal modes of learning in diverse settings; varied models of teaching and their applicability to different learners' needs. (Specific professional competence for service to narrowed populations of learners are part of specialized program requirements beyond the core requirements.)

D. Curriculum Resource

Sources of curricular materials; organizing prinicples for designing a curriculum for particular learner needs; match between the curriculum and the needs of groups and organizational settings.

E. Social Change Processes and Technologies

The impact of new technolgies on social institutions; short term social problems of cultural lag; long-range structural changes need for human adaptation to new conditions of living effective uses of computer technologies and social science technologies for promoting human potentials.

F. Futures Planning in Education and Human Services

Analysis of social trends and data; forecasting the future through examination of existing and past social trends; design of alternative futures supportive of improved quality of life; alternatives for preservation of human values in technological and information society; national and global society implications of choices made in the planning of social systems.

G. Social and Behavioral Sciences Methodologies and Computer Applications

Application of scientific methods, research tools, data gathering, data analysis in provision of social services; analysis of bodies of research on evaluation of social science practices; analysis of research reports from anthropology, sociology, psychology, political science, and education.

The categories above are not meant to be a blueprint for a curriculum, but as a foundation on which further specialized training will be based. Both graduate and undergraduate preparation of educators will require a common core of professional experiences and a specialized component. The professional core sequence of study will also be interwoven with an increased set of requirements in liberal education.

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